

Morley and De la Warr to be forgiven for leading their sons astray, are evidence. He wrote love-songs—"There is none, oh none, but you," and "Change thy mind since she doth change," and a few more are preserved in manuscript collections—and he largely patronised the drama. Naturally, Southampton's friend would be intimate with Shakespeare.

There is only one more Devereux, hisson, the "Essex" of the Civil Wars, in whose favour his father's attainder was reversed by James, in 1604. At fourteen, James, who thought his father had been done to death, married him to an heiress of the Howards. But while the lad was away on the grand tour, his wife fell in love with James's handsome favourite, Carr. James deserted Essex, making Carr Earl of Somerset, that Lady Essex—who, dressed as a page, had held his horse while he fought her husband, and who was suing for a divorce—might not lose rank by marrying him.*

This Essex was the last of his race. His conduct in the Civil War everybody knows. "Stone dead hath no fellow," was his advice as to Strafford, so convinced was he that the King's promise to give up his adviser could not be trusted. Charles showed him folly by trying to win Essex over by honours and compliments; but he went straight on on the constitutional line, showed his father's bravery when a regiment was running away at Edgehill; made the great blunder of carrying his army into Cornwall, where it had to surrender; and anticipated the "self-denying ordinance" by resigning. He was then very ill; and dying not long after, had a splendid state funeral. So end the Devereux.

A MILL ON THE DARENT.

As a rule, there is an obvious reason why particular industries should be centralised in particular places, and we at once understand why this should be a cotton centre and that a hardware centre; why this should be famous for iron-foundries and ship-building and that for its glass-making; why there should be special neighbourhoods for the production of pottery, or bricks, or cider, or cheese, or bacon, or fruit. But, on the other

hand, to the uninitiated outsider it would appear that chance or tradition has as much to do with the clinging around certain localities of certain industries, as any particular adaptability of the locality. For instance, he does not at first sight understand why Nottingham should be famous for lace-making, or Coventry for ribbon, or Buckinghamshire for chair-making, or Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire for straw-plaiting, or the country around Norwich for weaving, or Kent should remain as it always has been, famous for paper-making.

Of course there are reasons—as a rule, historical—for these seemingly accidental concentrations; but in the case of the Kent paper-making trade the reason is simple and practical—that in Kent there is an unlimited supply of pure spring water, which can be used without filtration. Papers that are made in Kent could not be made in any other part of the United Kingdom, as it has been found impossible to obtain elsewhere water of sufficient clearness to produce the brilliant purity of colour for which the Kentish paper is famous.

The first paper-mill in England was probably at Stevenage, in Hertfordshire; but there is historical evidence that paper-mills existed at Dartford, in Kent, early in the reign of Elizabeth. They have never deserted the neighbourhood, and, so famous have the mills built on the Cray, the Darent, and the Medway become, that there is hardly a corner of the world where Kentish paper, like the New-castle grindstone, is not to be found.

Snugly situated on the banks of the pleasant Darent river—nay, over the river itself—is the particular mill which we have chosen as a type—that of Messrs. Spalding and Hodge, standing within the parish of Horton Kirby, and known by that name, although close to the Farningham Road station and the village of Sutton at Hone.

There has been a paper-mill on this spot for more than a hundred years; but, between the Georgian mill which depended upon the little Darent for its motive power and upon a rough Kentish road for its means of transport, and its descendant of to-day, fitted up with the latest steam appliances and close to a busy main-line of railway, the difference is enormous.

After passing through an arch of the railway viaduct, which forms an imposing, although hardly a beautiful, entrance to

* It is some consolation that Carr and Lady Essex, accused of Sir T. Overbury's murder, ended by hating one another as vehemently as they had loved. For years they lived in the same house, poor, wretched, without exchanging a word.

the premises, we are at once transported from the tranquil world of shady lanes, hop-gardens, fruit-grounds, and orchards into the busy, active sphere of advanced modern industry. Immense ranges of buildings surround us; tall chimneys rise up on all sides; but rarely is the sweet country air tainted by exhalations from them, for the coal used is smokeless; the clang of hammers, the puffing of steam, the ceaseless whirr and thud of mighty machinery salute the ear; grimy men with bared arms peer forth from caverns lit by the lurid glare of a score of furnaces; great waggons pass us—those which we meet, laden with packed paper on its way to distribution all over the world; those which overtake us, filled with coals, or bales of rags and esparto grass.

On our right, behind us, is a peaceful oasis—a broad sheet of water wherein swans glide, reflecting the handsome front of the mills and washing the grassy slopes of the gardens attached to the private residence of the mill proprietors—and beyond this again rise the wooded hills leading away past an ancient church tower and the fine old Elizabethan mansion of Franks, to the pretty village of Farningham, ever dear to those who love “the contemplative man’s recreation.”

But we are here to see a paper-mill, and not to go into ecstasies over Kentish scenery, so we enter the first room, after having been informed by way of introduction that the manufacture of paper consists of six stages: washing, disintegration and reduction to pulp of the washed material—be it esparto grass or rags, or a mixture of both—the spreading of the pulp into layers, the draining it, the drying it, and the pressing and cutting of the paper.

In this first room the esparto grass, which principally comes from the Mediterranean coast of Spain, is being thrown by girls, with handkerchiefs bound over their heads as a protection from the dust, into a winnowing and disintegrating machine, which tears the wisps asunder. Hence the grass, now in bunches like hay, ascends up an inclined plane to the washing and boiling room; the winnowing machine, by crushing and separating the knots and excrescences, having prepared it for more complete reduction.

At the same time the rags—carefully chosen linen rags for the fine paper which alone is made here—have been boiled with caustic soda, and are ready to pass into

a cast-iron cistern, wherein they will be thoroughly disintegrated by a rapidly revolving cylinder set with blades, at the same time that they pass through pure clean water obtained, not from the river below, but from artesian wells.

Rags and grass, when thoroughly disintegrated, drained, and reduced to pulp, now pass to the bleaching-room. Here in large, round cisterns, we see the esparto grass in the shape of a yellow pulp slowly turning round and round under the engine which is in the cistern, helped on its way by the occasional application of a wooden shovel wielded by a dexterous hand. The pouring in of chloride of lime converts the yellow esparto mass into loose, white pulp; its condition at the conclusion of this, the second process, being that which is technically known as “half stuff.”

From the bleaching-room the “half stuff” descends to a large apartment, or rather gallery, where are the “beating-engines.” Rag pulp, however, retains chlorine longer than does esparto pulp; and, before it passes to the beating-engines, must lie in solution for some hours, in order that it may again be drained and pressed.

In the beating-room the “half stuff” still in round cast-iron cisterns, receives the sizing matter which is necessary in the case of paper designed for printing purposes, this sizing matter being a mixture of pounded alum and resin, and also whatever colouring that may be required—generally a deep ultramarine—which is poured on to it through square sieves before the mixture assumes the consistency of smooth, firm pulp, into which it is beaten by the rapidly revolving engine in the cistern.

From the beating-room the smooth pulp passes through a machine, which clears it from knots and unevenness of surface, into a trough, and from this trough it flows over a broad moleskin band on to an arrangement of wire-cloth situated in the last, and to us the most interesting, room of all.

This fine wire-cloth is an endless band passing over small rollers, and as the pulp slowly passes over it—in appearance not unlike gelatine coloured white—it receives a “jogging” movement, which serves to drain it completely.

From the wire-cloth the pulp passes under a “dandy roll,” which impresses upon it the water-mark; and from under

this roll it emerges in a tolerably compact condition, no longer pulp but paper, although delicate and brittle, and passes between two larger cylinders or rollers, covered with thick felt, which harden and solidify it still more, and serve to expel every atom of moisture which may not have drained through the wire-cloth.

After this, all that remains to be done is to dry the paper, which, after leaving the felt-bound rollers, has attained sufficient elasticity and strength to be independent of any support in the shape of endless strap. The drying process is carried out by means of a system of rotating steel cylinders, heated internally by steam, in and out of which the length of paper winds until it is finally caught upon a wooden roller at the end of the room, in the shape of the smooth, white, firm article of commerce. Practically, with such splendid machines in use as we see before us, there is no limit to the "web" of the paper manufactured. Indeed, Messrs. Spalding despatched to the Melbourne Exhibition, as a specimen of what could be done, one "web" which was nine miles and a half in length; and the piece might have been prolonged almost indefinitely.

From this interesting room the rollers of paper are taken to a large, cheerful, airy gallery, occupied almost entirely by women and girls, where the "webs" undergo the final processes previous to their despatch into the world in the shape of printing or writing paper. The paper first passes through a press and automatic cutting-machine, emerging down an inclined board in the shape of large sheets of paper, into the hands of small girls, who, at this work of receiving the pressed and cut paper, and making it into piles, serve their first apprenticeship to the business.

These piles of sheets next pass to older girls, who stand at a long counter, and who, with a seemingly marvellous dexterity only begot by constant practice, count the sheets by fours and pass them to the packer, the tier-up, or the envelope-maker. This dexterity and accuracy of counting by finger we have only seen equalled by the Chinese "shroffs" of oriental business houses, who, counting by "fours," as do the Kentish paper girls, calculate a thousand silver dollars, rejecting at the same time all bad or doubtful coin, in less time than a European would require to count a hundred.

Here we cannot refrain from making the observation that our notions of the presence

and appearance of the "mill-hand," as derived from portraits of that lady as she exists in the great industrial centres of Yorkshire and Lancashire, and as therefore applied to the entire community by an inexperienced outsider, received a pleasant contradiction at this Kentish paper-mill. Without a single exception we noticed that the women and girls were neat, clean, pleasant-looking, and decidedly contented. From the nature of their occupation, those employed in the first, or winnowing room, were coarsely attired, and somewhat more dishevelled in appearance than those engaged in the cleaner and less energetic occupations of the last room; but there was nothing of the rough about them, and certainly none of the boisterous and more or less language-garnished familiarity which greets even the most powerfully-escorted visitor to the North country mill.

In the case of writing paper, the "web," as received from the drying-room, after having been pressed, must go through further processes of sizing, and glazing, and cutting to pattern, all of which are performed by the most rapid and exact of perfected modern machinery.

Envelopes are turned out of a complicated little machine in an astonishing manner, the folding and gumming of the previously-shaped paper being done with what strikes the unaccustomed observer as almost magical rapidity and accuracy.

It may be interesting to readers to know that the whole of the paper used in the production of this journal comes from the manufactory of which we are attempting to give a description.

Naturally a community such as that connected with these Horton Kirby Mills, numbering some four hundred souls, forms a small colony per se, and must, therefore, be to some extent self-dependent. Hence, in addition to the paper-making staff proper, we have engineers and firemen, carpenters and blacksmiths, forming a strong company of their own, and associated entirely with the splendid sets of engines, which are well worthy of minute examination.

Outside the paper-making buildings proper are the carpenters' shops and the smiths' department, wherein are not only the endless repairs inseparable from such an establishment done, but many of the component parts of the various engines, such as the wooden rollers, which receive the paper in its last stage, made.

Nor should the packing-room be omitted

as unworthy of attention. Here the finished paper is pressed by hydraulic power, when intended for export, and packed apparently with such security and tightness as to defy any attempt at unpacking; whilst the paper intended for home consumption naturally requires less exact treatment, but not less skill in the art of compressing a good deal into a small space.

Here we take leave of our Kentish paper-mill, after a visit all too short for the amount of interest and instruction compressed into it; and as we compare our handful of esparto grass with the smooth, white paper into the likeness of which it can be converted, we involuntarily pay a tribute of respect to the marvellous ingenuity, precision, and perfection to which science has brought what, in the days when the Paston Letters were written, was the crudest of arts. Here, too, we may fittingly acknowledge the kindness and patience with which we were shown over the mills, and initiated into the mysteries of paper-making.

HIS MODEL.

"GOT a model for it at last? You've waited long enough."

"Found her last month."

"Working hard?"

"Very."

The two men were walking slowly, but they had reached the next street before his friend spoke again to the painter.

"Going to let me see it?" he said.

"Yes, if you like. Come any time, I'm nearly sure to be there, and ten to one you'll see the woman too."

"What's she like?"

"What I wanted exactly. Her face is perfect. Odd though, she is—more odd than most of them."

"How so?"

"Oh, I don't know. It's her eyes, I think. This is my corner. You'll turn up, then?"

"Yes, to-day possibly. I'm not doing much."

The painter walked quickly, after he left his friend, down a long, narrow street, till he came to a row of studios. He let himself into the second of the row—a long room, full of suggestive bits of colour, odds and ends of drapery here and there, and one or two curious old oak chairs and brackets. No one was there. The painter was ten minutes before the time he

had appointed for the model of whom he had spoken to his friend. He pulled into the middle of the room from one corner an easel with a canvas on it, and taking the covering from it stood looking at it, one of his hands resting on the easel. It was not a large canvas, but the story he had chosen to tell on it was strong. The central figure was that of a woman. She stood, a tall, white figure, half-leaning against an old, grey wall, to fall the next moment beside it in death; her white draperies were stained with blood; a dagger had been flung from her dying hand, which grasped and crushed in the agony of death the crimson roses growing over the grey stones. Not far from her, in the background, seeing only each other, were the man who had given away, and the woman who had taken, the love that should have been hers and hers only.

"Death," he meant to call it. It was one of those pictures, the first sight of which makes a mental impression which is a life-long possession. The drawing was wonderful, and the colouring perfect, but the painter's gaze concentrated itself on the splendid, white, drawn beauty of the face, and the frown with which he first uncovered his work deepened on his forehead. "Not an atom right, yet! Am I going to get the right thing there? I will have it—somehow. I can't—ah," with a change in his voice, "good morning," as a tall, slender woman came in.

"I am not late?" she asked, eagerly.

"No," he said, "I was early here. I'm ready for work, though."

She moved with a curious, graceful noiselessness to one corner of the large room, to lay on one of the oak chairs the shabby little hat which had partly hidden, but could not spoil, the high white brow, and low-growing, beautiful, yellow hair. In a few moments she wore, instead of the black dress, which was even more shabby than the hat, the flowing draperies he had painted, fastened at her waist with a silver girdle, and, with part of her long, wavy hair falling over her shoulders, stood before the painter, a face and form which had needed and received, in his picture, but little idealising. Her eyes were not the most noticeable thing about her at the first glance. They were very dark, unusually so for a fair woman, and there was something terrible in the light which could shine in them sometimes, so vividly that every other feature of her face seemed insignificant. She came to the end of the room

where he waited, and he began his work. Once or twice an impatient sigh from him broke the silence, and each time she raised her eyes to his face. They had a bright, intense light in them, but he said nothing, and he never saw the look.

The painter worked hard and long, and it was growing late in the afternoon. His model had silently watched him, had moved where he asked her, had stood as he wished her to stand, for two hours, when the door of the studio opened quickly and a high-pitched woman's voice said :

"May I come in?"

"Come in, yes," he said, rather impatiently, without turning his head, and a dark, small woman came across the room, a large silver *châtelaine* she wore jingling gently as she walked. She was very pretty, faultlessly pretty, and perfectly dressed.

"I'm sorry," she said, when she reached the painter and stood beside his easel. He stopped working, and turned towards her with a look on his face which was not vexation, not bitterness, but something of both. Yet the tone in which he said, "Yes—what is it?" was patient.

"I'm sorry," she repeated in a low tone. "You know I never do want to worry you here—I hardly ever come, do I? But I forgot to ask you for that cheque, and I must go to Madame Rose to-day. You know you said you'd take me on Tuesday to—oh, thank you," as taking his cheque-book out of his pocket, he tore a cheque out hastily and gave her.

"It's blank," he said.

"I told you——" she began, then suddenly breaking off as she turned to go, "Oh, is this the picture I heard the Professor asking you about on Thursday? I'm not sure if I like it"—going two or three steps back to look at it—"it's so dreadful. It's your great picture, isn't it? Will it sell, do you think?"

"It's not finished," was all he answered.

"Of course when it is finished, I mean. I must go, I'm so sorry to have interrupted you. You'll be home to dinner?" and without waiting for his answer the perfectly dressed little figure, with the jingling *châtelaine*, was gone out of the studio again.

He turned back to his work. He had not had time to look again at his model; had he looked at her, the burning light of the dark eyes would have startled him.

Then the door opened again, and the man who had walked with him to the

studio that morning came in, saying cheerily :

"I told you I should turn up. Hallo, is that it?"

He came up to the picture, and walked first to one point, then to another, to get on it the light he wanted. He found it at last, and stood perfectly still for a long five minutes, it seemed to the painter. Then he came close to him, and putting his hand on his shoulder, said heartily :

"That's all right; you know it is. Except—do you think you've got the agony of death—in the face, you know? I shouldn't have thought it was strong enough."

He did not wait for an answer, but gave a curious glance at the woman with the dark eyes, as he chattered on with his friend about small technical details. Then, breaking off abruptly, he said he must go; and as the painter accompanied him downstairs said :

"Odd, did you call her? I never saw such eyes. But what a perfect face!"

The painter came back to the studio in a few moments to find the tall, beautiful woman, his model, standing with one hand on the easel, looking fixedly at her own counterpart. She turned to him abruptly when he came in.

"What is it you want in it?" she said. "It is true, the death agony is not there."

He was so surprised that he could not at first answer; but the dark eyes were fixed on him, and feeling as if the words were drawn out of him without his consent, he said :

"No; I know I cannot get it—cannot realise it. Every day it seems nearer, and then farther from me, and I must have it. I must have success. I cannot do without it. Heaven knows I have nothing else."

The dark eyes looked him through and through, and, it seemed to him, forced the words from him. The next instant, when she had turned her head and stood looking at the sky outside, he felt as if he had waked from a dream. How otherwise could he have spoken thus to a woman he knew hardly at all—only as his model? More quietly he went on :

"I suppose I ought to see it—the thing itself. Of course I've studied death; but a passionate death like this—it's impossible, of course." She looked at him again, and he finished hurriedly : "All my work is nothing without it. I must get it."

It was late, too late for any more work,

he said. She dressed quickly, again putting on the shabby black hat over her glorious hair.

"Wednesday, for an hour, at the same time," he said.

"Wednesday," she answered, nothing more, and was gone.

Alone, quickly, along narrow back streets she walked, until she came to the dark little room which was hers. She sat down in the window without one glance at anything in the room, only taking off her hat and dropping it beside her on the floor. One elbow was on the window-sill. She rested her head on her hand and sat perfectly still, her eyes on the fading sunset.

Our lives can come so very near to each other and never touch.

How was he to know—the man she had left half an hour ago—how near the longings she had made him speak of came to her? How was he to know that the weeks during which she had been his model, had been for this woman one intense storm of passion; that she who had used her beauty to deceive one man after another in her short, restless life, now, for the first time, loved too wildly and passionately ever again to give one thought or look to any man on earth beside; that to stand for one day in the place of the woman who had given half a glance at his work that afternoon, this woman would have given her soul? He would never know, or care to know. Never know, either, the thought which gave her face, as she looked steadily out at the sunset, an expression it had never worn before. Her eyes flashed, and into her face came a deeper and deeper colour, but she did not move, only her hands held each other in a grasp which grew tighter and tighter.

He wanted something. She could give it him. Life, which had been valueless to her, grew suddenly priceless. She, and she only could— On Wednesday, he should have it.

For more than an hour the painter had been working on Wednesday, then remembering the time he had told her was over:

"To-morrow I'll go on," he said.

"No, not to-morrow," she answered. "Now!"

He was so engrossed with his work, and so expecting some ordinary response from her, that he did not, at first, realise what she had said. A moment later he did; the odd tone of her voice ringing suddenly

in his ear. He looked up quickly. The wonderful dark eyes were fixed on him—held him fast. They lighted a face white with the whiteness of death. Once more they flashed—at his voice in a choked, terrified exclamation. Then their light was gone. He had reached her too late; the dagger fell from her hand; there was a quick gasp, one long, quivering sigh, and when he raised her in his arms he had seen the death agony of "a passionate death."

"Not seen his great picture! Why, where have you been, my dear fellow? Oh, only a fortnight home. Thought it was more. My memory's going—over-work! Third room of course—come along. Fine, isn't it? Wonderful, that death agony in the face. Did you hear— Oh, you didn't! Odd thing—awful! His model stabbed herself before he had finished it. Thinking of it turned her head, I suppose. It's twice the picture it was, though—saw it in March. He's made his name now, that's certain."

A POPULAR RESORT.

WOULD you have an Arcadian valley where rural simplicity reigns in full force? You may find it within a dozen miles of the General Post Office, and within the beat of the Metropolitan Police. Such a one is the valley of the Brent for many miles of its course. Here is a spot that railways have never penetrated, nor, in the days before railways, had it ever heard the twanging horn of the stage-coach. It is doubtful, indeed, whether even a carrier's cart has been seen in this part of the valley. Roads are few, and they lead a long way round. Finger-posts exist, some of them indicating "London" among the villages to which they show the way; but these are not numerous, and it is easy to lose your way between Greenford Parva and Magna, and to wander far without meeting anybody to put you in the right way. Greenford Parva, by the way, is the stately and official title for Perivale—which some say should be Purevale, on account of the purity of its air and the limpidity of its waters—while Greenford Magna justifies its description by extending, from one end to the other, perhaps a couple of miles, but with little more than a dozen of houses to show by the way.

Something about the little River Brent

seems to bring calm and seclusion wherever it flows. Here you come upon primitive little bridges, with footways elevated so as to keep out of the reach of the floods; there you lose sight of the stream as it winds its way through the meadows fringed with silvery willows and darker alders. And yet, if you start with the Brent from where it loses itself in Father Thames, the character just given to the stream will seem singularly inappropriate. Brentford seems to be a favoured seat of all kinds of unpleasant manufactures, and its one long street has nothing attractive about it. And yet you may catch a glimpse of orchards, cottages, and pleasant meadows, beyond the factories and gas-works, which may suggest that old Brentford, in the days of its early monarchs, say, was a pleasant place enough, and a capital worthy of its rival kings.

Anyhow, there is pleasant country between Brentford and Hanwell, with Heston and Osterley Park close at hand, all well wooded and cheerful; and the River Brent comes wimpling through the meadows, a quiet country stream, before it joins the canal and goes into business towards Brentford. There is a pleasant lane, too, that leads past Hanwell Park, with its tall elms, and lush grass, and weedy avenues leading to the old brown stuccoed house, all empty and deserted—a grassy winding way that comes out at Greenford.

It was Greenford a thousand years ago, and it is Greenford still, only the ford has been supplemented by a couple of humble wooden bridges crossing the two channels of the Brent, which manages to take up a good deal of room about here, and leaves abundant traces on the green, rank herbage of the floods it sometimes indulges in. In fact, the river requires elbow-room, just because it makes an elbow—and a very decided elbow—at this very spot. The stream comes almost due west, as if it meant to join the Colne before it reached the Thames; but it takes a swirl round by the green ford, and then marches almost due south for Brentford. And just at the elbow is a little country inn retired from the highway, with a green about it that slopes down to the river, upon which a number of ducks and geese are preening their snowy plumage.

Through trees and hedges you get a glimpse of the river, as it pursues its way on its changed course between banks of the most vivid green. On a bench by the

ale-house door, some haymakers are resting and refreshing themselves. The little house shines white against the dark foliage beyond, and its sign, swinging far in advance from a tall post, shows against the dun yellow of a huge haystack that is growing bigger and bigger as the loaded waggons come in from the fields. Other mighty stacks have been finished and thatched, and almost hide from sight the farmhouse and its new brick buildings. Then there is a glimpse of a road that runs up the hill, cool and pleasant in the shade of tall trees, and of some old-fashioned houses, roofed with red ridge-tiles, that make a one-sided street of the country road.

It is an "annus mirabilis" for green Greenford this year of grace, eighty-eight; August well in and the corn harvest just due, and here we are in haymaking time. Hay and grass seem to be all in all in this happy valley. There was a good deal more ploughing done here in the days of the Conqueror than now; for then a large proportion of the land of the manor was arable, and six or seven teams of stately oxen might have been seen at work on the brown fields. And in the early part of the century, when Lysons compiled his "Environs of London," there were still nearly three hundred acres under the plough. Now we have changed all that—there is nothing but grass to be seen all along the wide fields.

It is something of a walk from the ford to the end of the village, where is the church and the vicarage, with a few scattered houses and a cottage or two, where, in the windows, may be seen a small store of sweets, with cottons and needles, and such items of village traffic. Every cottage has its little garden, gay with all kinds of flowers; and, indeed, flowers seem to flourish with great luxuriance all through the valley. And Greenford Church is a small and ancient building, mostly of flint, and roofed with red tiles, with a wooden porch and tower, very homely but taking; and some ancient monuments are within.

Little altered, indeed, is the place in all probability for all the centuries since the Conquest; no, nor for long years before; hardly at all, perhaps, since King Ethelred gave the manor to the Abbey of Westminster. It has been Church property ever since; only in the sixteenth century it was transferred to the Bishop of London, and to this circumstance is due some part of its unchangeableness.

From opposite the church a field-path leads to Perivale—a path through many fields, and all of the largest possible size; in some of them lines of men are tedding the hay; in others, the grass is still uncut. There are stiles of the good old country pattern, and on this broiling day, especially grateful is the shade from the hedgerow trees and the rest afforded by the broad-backed stile. Out of the grassy plain rises a chain of hills, of a really commanding aspect, the chief of which, tufted with trees, among which appear the roofs of houses and tall chimney-stacks, is known as Horsington Hill. Then we have

The slow canal, the yellow-blossomed vale,
The willow-tufted bank. . . .

And from the top of the high-arched bridge there is to be seen a slow procession of gaily-painted barges that have loaded, perhaps, at the London Docks, and whose voyage may end at some smoky, busy Midland town, but which are here enjoying the *dolce far niente* of this calmest and most peaceful of vales.

The field-path ends at last in a country lane just at the foot of the hill that has been such a conspicuous object all the way; and the lane abuts upon a highway where there is a farmhouse, and a duck-pond, and more big haystacks, and this is Perivale. Past the farmhouse opens out another field-path, and this way lies the church, which is smaller than Greenford Church, but of much the same character, with its homely wooden tower and air of hale antiquity. Here we have the canal again, taking a graceful sweep through the fields, and we might follow the tow-path to Paddington, with a view of Kensal Green by the way from its grassy banks. Or the foot-path will take us directly across to Castle Bar, Ealing, where lamp-posts make their appearance, and cabs are to be met with, and the varied resources of civilisation are at hand.

Or, again, we may follow the course of the Brent up to Twyford, which is as green and pleasant and secluded as any part of Brent vale. The name of Twyford Abbey suggests ruins and monastic traditions; but if ruins there are, they must be built up in the modern house, and except for a little church in the grounds which serves the neighbourhood, there is nothing of an ecclesiastical character to mark the spot.

Above Twyford, the river, still avoiding the busy haunts of men, passes between Wilsdon and Neasdon, and rises somewhere on the borders of Barnet Heath

—at least, so people say, and the Ordnance Map confirms it, although we may have a private opinion that this part of the river course has never been thoroughly explored. Even the region we have just traversed with so much pleasure is almost unknown, except to the most enterprising pedestrians. There was one Hassell, an artist who fifty years or more ago made a sketching tour along the Paddington and Grand Junction Canals, and published the result with a description of the route in a volume which is now rather scarce. Well, this route should have brought our artist into the very midst of our Arcadian valley; but he abandons the track when on its verge with a crude remark to the effect that beyond such a point the route affords no interest. Has anybody since explored this sweet valley, and recorded the result in permanent form? If so, the result has escaped the researches of the present writer.

Between the source of the Brent, however, and that undiscovered region in the Wilsdon and Neasdon quarter, where the river must be put to it to escape the enterprising builder of the period—between these two points we come again upon the river under widely changed conditions. It seems comic to talk of seclusion or tranquillity in connection with the Edgware Road, and yet, there it is. The busy and dusty Edgware Road escapes from shops and emporiums; it leaves behind nursery gardens, villas, terraces; its omnibuses grow fewer and fewer. It takes some formidable heights in its course, it trundles down Shootup Hill, and scales the pleasant heights of Cricklewood. The road to Dollis Hill is passed, and fields and hedgerows are struggling hard in a losing battle with bricks and mortar. And then the road takes a rise and dip, and we are unexpectedly in a lake country. Soft, green hills encompass a wide expanse of water, the influx of which we cross by a low, arched bridge. The upper end of the lake is lost among the hills. White sails catch the furtive gleams of sunshine, and shine forth out of the soft watery distance; gay pleasure-boats dimple the placid surface of the lake. Here a foot-path winds up a green hillside; there, beyond the bridge, stands a house, which has every appearance of one of the old-fashioned coaching inns of the olden time, with stables, great outbuildings, roomy courtyards; but so far from being grass-grown and deserted, like the most part of its con-

temporaries, here it is in full tide of business. What torrents of ale pour from spouting beer-engines; how crowded the bars; how thronged the restaurations! What vehicles drive up to the hospitable doors; what ostlers and helpers are busy with the sheeted coach-horses! Here are beer-gardens, pleasure-gardens, tea-gardens—all with gay flower-beds, and soft parterres, and grassy lawns sloping down to the water's edge; and if all the world of London does not find its way to the pleasant scene, on fine summer evenings—when such there be—it is a numerous section of it that finds the materials for a happy day among the varied resources of the place.

This is the Welsh Harp—the old Welsh Harp—and its name was probably given to it in compliment to the Welshmen who used to come in such throngs to the great cattle fairs at Barnet and elsewhere. Our artistic precursor, Hassell, relates how, wandering in these parts, he came across great herds of wild black Welsh cattle, on their way to the fair, attended by Welsh drovers almost as dark and wild, whose picturesque costumes, vivid gestures, and unknown tongue, were in strange contrast to their placid English surroundings. The lake, however, which gives so much importance to the place as a pleasure resort, is of origin comparatively modern, having been formed in 1838, it is said, to supply the locks of the Regent's Park Canal, then in process of construction.

But was there nothing in the way of pool or mere, already existing, to form the nucleus of the lake? At the head of the lake, which is nearly three miles in length, stands the village of Kingsbury, which, as its name implies, was once the seat of Royalty; perhaps of one of the petty princes of the Saxon Heptarchy. It has an interesting church, small and ancient, whose walls contain Roman bricks and tiles, and which bears traces, it is said, of pre-Norman masonry. The adjoining pool would account for the choice of the site for a hunting lodge and pleasure house by the Saxon Princes—as aquatic in their tastes as their descendants. Anyhow, the waterfowl seem to recognise the place as an ancient haunt. Tern, snipe, plover, gulls, widgeon, and other aquatic birds resort to the lake, and rare and curious birds are occasional visitants. There is good store of fish, too, in the waters: jack, bream, perch, and carp, which often attain to Royal proportions, and the Harp is the

head-quarters of sundry angling clubs, while multitudes who love an occasional day's fishing, take tickets for the preserved waters of the lake.

Our first view of the Harp and its surroundings was obtained from a railway carriage on the Midland line, where there is a station named after the hotel—a carriage thickly packed with Bank Holiday excursionists, some of whom were going on to Saint Albans, while others alighted to join the assemblage at the Welsh Harp. But the road was the wonderful sight—the long stretch of Edgware Road, up hill and down dale, thronged with carriages and vehicles of every kind and degree. Here are loaded omnibuses; here are great four-horse vans clustered thickly with passengers; here are landaus, britzskas, and vehicles of ancient build, that see daylight perhaps only on Bank Holidays; with gigs and dog-carts, pony traps and donkey carts, all occupied by a lively and musical crowd, who sing and play, and exchange lively sallies with passers-by, the ladies being even more ready and quick of repartee than their companions. Cyclists, too, whirl past in scores, and parties of equestrians come pounding along on horses hired for the day, and at a pace which has evidently been arranged beforehand between the sagacious steed and his master at home, and which the rider has little power to alter. Along the road, in every open nook, appear tents and booths, with flags and streamers fluttering in the breeze.

And now comes rattling down the hill and over the bridge, with a merry blast of the horn, the "Wonder" coach for Saint Albans, while the horses for the change troop amiably out of the stable yards, and everybody is on the alert for one of the events of the day. There are three minutes for refreshments while the horses are being changed, and the coachman emerges with a red, red rose in his button-hole, which was not there before, and thus, with the cognizance of the house of Lancaster displayed, the coach departs for Saint Albans.

But in a general way the vehicles halt for a good deal longer than the conventional three minutes, at the hospitable doors of the Harp. All kinds of stray performers take advantage of the general halt, to claim attention—jugglers and mountebanks, gipsy fortune-tellers—but strange to say, no card-sharpers or purse-trick men. Either the police are too vigilant, or these knights of industry pro-

claim a truce with the world in general to-day, and keep Bank Holiday themselves.

But if from all this festive bustle, we turn aside to the field-path over the hill, at once the ancient charm reasserts itself. How quiet the place is, how secluded, how thoroughly rural in spite of all the passing crowd! The green shelving banks of the lake, indeed, are crowded with holiday-makers, flags wave and music plays, and there is a confused sound of shouts and laughter, as swings go up and down, and cars revolve, and all the fun so dear to holiday-makers proceeds at full blast. But through it all come the soft whisper of the breeze, the gentle plash of the water against the shore, the sound of a creaking oar, the twitter of birds in the hedgerows, and the cawing of distant rooks who are keeping, too, their Bank Holiday.

Here we see that a wide creek makes from the main body of the lake, and winds up a subsidiary valley, giving variety to the outline of the lake, and enhancing the effect of the wide sweep of waters. Flanking the creek, and stretching down to the edge of the lake, has been pitched a volunteer encampment, the white tents gleaming pleasantly on the green sward, and the red coats scattered cheerfully around. Solitary fishermen, patient and motionless, are reflected here and there in the placid waters; but where the public way abuts on the lake, and fishing is, perforce, free, a tierred rank of anglers stands shoulder to shoulder. Where there is water enough to float a cork and morsel of quill, there is to be found a group of anglers and a little fleet of floats.

As the day wears on, the festal note becomes even the more pronounced, although the cloudy skies threaten showers, and the wind rises fitfully and drives angry little waves in foam upon the shore. There will be coloured lamps lit up by-and-by, more music, more impromptu dancing, more fun of the fair. Fireworks will blaze in the air, and rockets will cast a glow over the waters, while the old, dead Princes who lie under King-bury Church might almost be expected to turn themselves uneasily and wish themselves alive again, to join in the racket.

PANSIE.

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

"WELL, Pansie, all I can say is that I'm awfully sorry," said Mr. Lancelot

Selfe, a young man clad in flannels, who was sprawling at full length on the turf by the side of the tennis-ground of an old Sussex manor-house, one calm evening in late August.

"Awfully sorry about what?" asked Pansie Wyman—nineteen, brown-haired, and brown-eyed—who was seated on a camp-stool close by the young man.

"Why, that we've had our last game of tennis for goodness knows how long; that you're going away; and that I've got to be buried alive in this dull, little, out-of-the-way place with those two old gals."

"Those two old gals! Hush, Lancy! You ought to be ashamed of yourself for speaking of the two dear old aunts in that disrespectful way," said Pansie.

"Well, of course I'm very fond of them, and all that, especially as they are my only relations in the world, and are so kind to you, but it's rather hard lines for a fellow to be condemned to exchange the society of one with whom he—with whom he——"

"Well, with whom he what?"

"With whom he has fallen head over heels in love," said Mr. Lancelot.

"Well, I declare!" exclaimed Pansie in mock astonishment. "And who asked you to fall in love?"

"Who asked me? Nobody. Who made me? Why, you," replied the young man. "I'm clean bowled, and that's the long and short of it; and now, just as we are beginning to understand each other, you have to go back to Athena House."

"But surely you wouldn't have me turned out into the world a half-educated, gawky, bread and butter miss, would you?" asked Pansie.

"Well," replied the young man. "If you're half-educated, gawky, and bread and butterish, all I can say is, education be hanged!"

Mr. Lancelot Selfe was a young barrister, who had been invited by his aunts and sole relatives, the Misses Julia and Aurelia Penless, to spend the long vacation with them at their Sussex house. Pansie Wyman was an American, and had been sent to England to finish her education at Miss Sage's famous school, Athena House, Sussex Square, Brighton, by her father, a retired Colonel, who now occupied a responsible position on one of the lines of railroad which run through the gold and silver districts of Colorado and Nevada. The Misses Penless were distant relatives of

the Colonel, and under their care he had placed Pansie, his only child, the result being that the young lady, being of a lively and intelligent disposition, as well as an exceedingly pretty girl, had captivated the young Englishman, and had learnt to reciprocate his feelings towards her in a way which was very apparent to the two maiden aunts.

"Time we went in to dinner," said Lancelot, after a pause. "The aunts will be working themselves up into a frenzy."

So the pairsauntered slowly up through the pleasant gardens, until they came in sight of the three-gabled, red-brick house known as Furnace Court—a name which recalled the ancient iron industry of Sussex—at the door of which could be discerned the figures of two elderly ladies.

"There they are," said Lancelot. "Pansie, prepare to bow your head to the storm. I say, Pansie, why is your father so down on Englishmen?"

"Oh, I don't know," replied the girl. "He's a prejudiced warrior of the old Union school, and he can't forget the part your people took in the civil war."

"Then I wonder he sends his daughters to be educated amongst us," said Lancelot.

"Well, I've wondered that too," said Pansie. "But I believe there's more bark than bite in him, and all the time that he pretends to hate Britain and Britishers he admires them."

"And I suppose if I were to ask you to be my wife, he'd——"

"Lan—ce—lot!"

"Pan—sie! Well?"

The girl became absorbed in the study of her own feet; but Lancelot could see the colour mounting to her face. So he continued:

"I suppose you wouldn't have me if I were to ask you?"

But before Pansie chose to reply they were at the house, from the porch of which Miss Aurelia Penless was glaring at them through a pair of black spectacles.

"Mind what I say, you young people," was the greeting of the maiden aunt. "One of these fine evenings you will catch your deaths of cold. You go and make yourselves hot over that stupid tennis, and you come sauntering back in the chilly air in defiance of all hygienic rules and regulations."

"Bless your heart, aunt!" said Lancelot, "we've finished playing a long time."

"Then why didn't you come straight home?" retorted Miss Aurelia. "Pansie,

if I send you back to Athena House with a cold, I shall have such a letter from Miss Sage to begin with, and such a doctor's bill to end with, that I should never forgive myself."

"Don't you fret yourself, auntie!" exclaimed Pansie, throwing her arms round Miss Aurelia's neck and kissing her, her favourite method of getting everything her own way at Furnace Court. "Where's Aunt Julia?"

"She's dressing for dinner, and as it wants but ten minutes to seven, you had best go and do likewise," replied the mollified Miss Aurelia.

That evening after dinner when, according to custom, the little party separated into two groups, the elder and the younger, there were two very serious conversations held.

The conclusion at which the aunts arrived over the bezique table was that matters between Pansie and Lancelot had gone far enough, and that it was the most fortunate thing in the world that Pansie was going back to Athena House the next day. Up to this vacation, the notion that Pansie would captivate any man had never disturbed the peace of mind of the Misses Penless, for she had returned from the last term but one a lanky, unattractive, awkward school-girl; but when she came home for the midsummer holidays, after a long term of nearly four months, they were astonished to see what an alteration for the better time had wrought in her, and would certainly have hesitated before inviting a young man like Lancelot Selfe to spend his vacation with them, could they have foreseen it.

Not that there was anything objectionable in a match between the young English barrister of good means and the pretty American girl, from an ordinary point of view; but that they were under the strictest injunctions from the other side of the Atlantic to keep a strict watch on Pansie, and they had sufficient reasons for keeping on friendly terms with Colonel Wyman.

The conclusion at which the young couple arrived behind the shelter of the piano, was that they were destined for each other, and that neither could conveniently exist without the other; that school was a tyrannous institution for a girl of nineteen; that maiden aunts, however kind and useful in other ways, were rather troublesome when a courtship was in progress; and

that it was almost criminal to yield to the unreasonable prejudices of parents.

The evening post delivery was an important event at Furnace Court, and it would have almost amounted to sacrilege for any one to propose an adjournment to bed before the hour of its arrival, which was usually as the clocks were striking ten.

The budget upon this evening was small, but important, comprising two American letters, one for Miss Aurelia Penless, the other for Pansie.

Pansie opened hers and read comfortably enough until she came to a paragraph which made the colour fly from her cheeks, and which was as follows:

"And now, my dear girl, as I calculate this ought to reach you just about the time when you will be returning to school after the midsummer vacation, let me exhort you to make the most of the few weeks before you, as it is my intention to remove you from school at Christmas, in order that you may return to America. I shall look forward to seeing a finished, accomplished young lady; and there is some one else here who is anticipating your arrival quite as anxiously as I am. Of course I mean Mr. Jem Forrest. I see no reasons whatever why, with the extraordinary advantages you have enjoyed, you should not be ready to take your place at once in the distinguished society of which Mr. Forrest is so prominent a member."

"In other words," commented Pansie, after she had read out this paragraph to Lancelot, "I am to go home at Christmas to be married to a man of my father's choice, and of whom I know next to nothing."

"But who is this Mr. Jem Forrest?" asked Lancelot.

"Nobody seems to know exactly who he is," replied Pansie. "He lives in good style, and goes into good society, and I seem to remember having heard his name associated with silver mines. But really, Lancy, I know as little about him as you do."

"Is your father under any obligation to him?" asked the young man.

"None that I know of," answered Pansie.

"What sort of a looking fellow is he?" asked Lancelot.

"Well, of course, he's ever so much older than you are," replied the girl. "But there is such a strong resemblance between you, that in an uncertain light or at a

distance, a stranger, or indeed any one who did not know you as well as I do, might mistake one for the other."

"Really? Or are you only chaffing?" said her lover.

"Really," said Pansie. "So that at any rate it will be a faint consolation to you to know that I shall have a decent-looking man for a husband."

"Nay, now you're chaffing, and the matter is far too serious to be laughed about. Tell me, Pansie, what shall you do?"

"I leave it in your hands, Lancy," replied the girl. "Of one thing you may be sure, that I love you and you alone, and that whatever happens, no other man shall be my husband."

"Thank you for that speech, my darling," said the young man, seizing the girl's hand and kissing it, a proceeding which, being observed by Miss Julia, brought about an immediate dispersal of the party to their several bedrooms.

CHAPTER II.

PANSIE returned to Athena House, Sussex Square, Brighton, in due course the next day. She went off sadly, and in disgrace; sadly, because she knew not when she should see Lancelot again; in disgrace, because, in the presence of her aunts and the entire household of Furnace Court assembled to bid her good-bye, she had been the willing and unblushing recipient of a sounding kiss from the young gentleman.

But her reception at Athena House partially atoned for what she had undergone. There she was the acknowledged sovereign of some thirty young ladies, who looked up to her as the arbiter of fashion, as the leader of all fun and amusement, as the referee in all disputed matters, and as the handsomest and cleverest girl in the school. Moreover, strange to say, she had not a rival, much less an enemy, amongst them; for, despotic as she was, her despotism was of so gentle and winning a nature, that whilst everybody admired, nobody was jealous of her. She was popular, too, with the rigid Miss Sage and her teachers, who only complained that she was clever enough to afford to be idle.

But every one remarked a great change in Pansie when she returned from the midsummer holidays. She seemed to have lost the high spirits and the irrepressible

fun which had so helped to make her popular. The thousand and one little matters which formerly interested and amused her, seemed now to have no charm for her; she was silent and depressed. More than once she was discovered in tears; and Miss Sage herself remarked that her favourite pupil seemed to be more indifferent about success, and less brilliant than before.

At first a great many solutions were offered. Pansie was taking to heart her approaching departure from a country in which she had made so many friends, and which she had learnt to regard almost as her own. She had received bad news from America; she had quarrelled with the two maiden aunts of whom everybody had heard, and whose peculiarities she exhibited with such exquisite mimicry. But when it was noted that she wrote a great many letters which she posted surreptitiously, instead of consigning them to the common receptacle of Athena House correspondence, suspended to Miss Sage's desk, the real reason for her changed demeanour was patent, and it was whispered about that Pansie Wyman was in love.

The next thing to be found out was the object of her affection. She was eagerly watched as the school took its usual constitutional along the Marine Parade; but there was no Adonis who seemed to gaze after her in particular, although there were plenty of young bucks who made a daily duty of inspecting Athena House as it proceeded demurely along as far as the Aquarium and back.

Young ladies are keen logicians when they have a symptom or two given them by way of premisses, so it was concluded that Pansie had fallen in love during the holidays, that she had thereby incurred the wrath of her aunts, and that her low spirits arose from these circumstances. The interest which this occasioned in the little world of Athena House may be imagined, but there was no surprise. The only wonder was that a pretty, clever, accomplished, vivacious girl like Pansie Wyman should have so long remained scatheless, and, as she was still imitated in spite of her altered demeanour, a regular epidemic of love set in, and there was not a girl at Athena House with the smallest pretensions to good looks, who did not become melancholy, who did not take to reading poetry, and who did not profess admiration for one or other of the aforesaid young Marine Parade loungers.

Miss Sage of course knew nothing of this. Never having captivated a masculine heart herself, she was not versed in the ailments of those who had, or who pretended to have, and she attributed the alteration in Pansie Wyman's manner to grief at approaching departure from England in general, and Athena House in particular.

But an accident very soon opened her eyes to the real state of affairs.

Several petty larcenies had taken place in the school of late. Many of the girls complained that they missed little articles from their desks and boxes. Suspicion was at first pointed at a certain liveried youth who opened the door, waited at table, and performed sundry menial offices in the regions below, and who was known by the name he called himself, William. But one morning, Miss Sage, descending to the schoolroom, met Susan, the house-maid, hurrying along the passage with a highly-coloured face suggestive of confusion, and her hand concealed under her apron.

"Susan," said Miss Sage, "what have you been doing?"

"Please, 'm, I hanswered the post, that's all," replied the damsel, with still heightening colour.

"It isn't your place to answer the post," said her mistress. "William does that. What have you got under your apron?"

"Only a letter, 'm," replied Susan.

"Let me see it," said Miss Sage.

The girl hesitated, and her hand fumbled uneasily in its hiding-place.

"Come, come, show it to me," continued the mistress, her suspicions now fully aroused.

So Susan, seeing that further resistance was useless, handed to Miss Sage a letter addressed, in a big, bold, masculine hand, to Miss Wyman.

"What business have you with Miss Wyman's letter?" asked Miss Sage.

The girl looked sheepishly at the floor-cloth, and made no reply.

Miss Sage examined the letter again. The postmark was "West Strand." The writing was certainly not that of either of Pansie's aunts, and she knew of no gentleman with whom the young lady was on terms of corresponding intimacy.

"I require an explanation at once, Susan, if you please," she continued, "or I shall be obliged to infer that you are acting dishonestly."

At that moment Pansie came hurrying up. When she saw the attitudes of Miss

Sage and Susan, she divined the cause and looked confused.

"Miss Wyman," said the mistress, "Susan has been keeping a letter of yours."

"Oh, yes, yes," said Pansie, falteringly. "It's all right, I am expecting news from—from a friend of mine, and as William is so slow in delivering the letters, I asked Susan to be good enough to get mine at once, and bring them to me."

Miss Sage made no remark, but handed Pansie her letter with a look which sufficiently expressed what she thought about the matter.

"She'll go and write to the aunts," thought Pansie, as she hurried away, "and then——"

Miss Sage did write to Miss Aurelia, and by return of post received an answer detailing all the circumstances of Pansie's little love affair, with which we are familiar, and warning Miss Sage to keep a strict watch on the girl's movements. The results were that Athena House, for the future, took its airings in the comparatively deserted direction of Rottingdean, and that Miss Sage took the letters from the postman herself.

She, however, said nothing more about the matter to Pansie, for she was sensible enough to argue that, so long as the girl did not set a bad example to younger companions by carrying on an open flirtation at school, it was no business of hers, if a young lady of a sensible age should carry on a love affair away from it.

But, one evening, a second accident made her aware that the love-making process was being carried on very much nearer her than she had imagined.

The half-dozen senior girls at Athena House occupied separate little partitions, instead of sleeping in a large room with others. Every other one of these partitions had a window looking out into Sussex Square. One of these was tenanted by Pansie Wyman.

Miss Sage had wakeful nights, for, being a contributor to the "Poet's Corner" of a local newspaper, her fits of inspiration seized her when released from the worry and turmoil of the schoolroom, and, especially when the moon shone over the sea, she would sit at her open window and meditate until long after Athena House was wrapped in sleep.

She was thus occupied a night or two after the discovery above recorded, when

she heard voices—a male and a female—engaged in earnest conversation close by her, and the female voice was not to be mistaken for that of any one but Pansie Wyman.

Gently craning her neck out, she espied the figure of a man standing out in clear relief against the pavement below, his head upturned, and his words unmistakably addressed to an inmate of Athena House.

Miss Sage saw all this at a glance, withdrew her night-capped head, and silently passed along the dormitory occupied by the senior girls. Her surmise as to the owner of the feminine voice proved correct, and she heard an animated conversation being carried on between Miss Wyman and the cavalier on the pavement outside.

The method of dealing with such a serious breach of all orthodox laws of propriety and school discipline, of course, required consideration, so Miss Sage paused until the voices ceased. The window was shut, and then she went to consult with one of the other mistresses as to the course to be followed.

The next morning, when the girls assembled in the schoolroom for prayers, Miss Sage entered with that expression of countenance which, experience had taught the young ladies of Athena House, betokened a disturbed and irritated state of mind. Instead of commencing the prayers in the usual style, Miss Sage stepped to the front of her desk and scanned the rows of faces before her, as if in search of some one. Then she said in a grave voice:

"Has not Miss Wyman descended from the dormitory yet?"

It being evident that she had not, Miss Sage rang the bell for Susan. William, the boy, answered it, and announced that Susan was not up.

Miss Sage's face darkened, and she said: "Go and knock at Miss Wyman's door and acquaint her with the hour."

The boy disappeared, but reappeared shortly with a white, scared face, saying:

"Please, 'm, Miss Wyman ain't in her room, and nobody don't know nothink about Susan."

Miss Sage rushed from the room, returned in ten minutes, and hurried through the prayers.

During breakfast it was whispered that Pansie Wyman and Susan had both left Athena House, and had taken their luggage with them.